

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8262

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 4291

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, SWEL, HO

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH NAPOLEON ACEVEDO,
PRESIDENT OF SUTRASFICO

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 4292

1. FOLLOWING MY OCTOBER 6TH MEETING WITH STANDARD
FRUIT OFFICIALS (DESCRIBED IN SEPTEL) I MET WITH A
DELEGATION FROM THE COMPANY UNION, SUTRASFICO.
UNION PRESIDENT NAPOLEON ACEVEDO WAS ACCCOMPANIED
B CARLOS REYES, GAIBRIEL BANEGRAS AND FIDEL MARTINEZ.
(COMMENT: REYES, AN OFFICER OF THE BEER AND SOFT DRINK
WORKERS UNION, AND MARTINEZ HAVE LONG RECORDS OF
COMMUNIST ACTIVITY) ACCOMPANYING ME WERE LOWELL KILDAY
(ARA/CEN, WASHINGTON) AND EMBOFF ARLEN WILSON.

2. MR. ACEVEDO GEGAN THE MEETING BY THANKING US
FOR GIVING THEM THE TIME TO EXPRESS SOME CONCERNS;
ALSO, FOR THE ASSISTANCE BEING PROVIDED TO THE
UNFORTUNATE HONDURAN PEOPLE BY THE UNITED STATES.
HE THEN WENT ON TO CONVEY HIS OPINION THAT STANDARD
WAS INVOLVED IN AN ANTI-UNION CAMPAIGN AS AN
ADJUNCT TO STANDARD'S ACTIVITIES IN EMERGENCY SUPPLY
DISTRIBUTION. HE SAID STANDARD WAS IN CHARGE OF
ALL DISTRIBUTION AND THAT STANDARD EMPLOYEES ARE
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USING THIS ADVANTAGE TO TELL UNION MEMBERS THAT

THE UNION IS DOING NOTHING. ACEVEDO CLAIMED THAT MATERIALS WERE BEING WITHHELD FROM UNION MEMBERS. HE SAID THAT THE UNION SHOULD BE THE DISTRIBUTING AGENT OR AT LEAST SHARE SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE ACTIVITY BUT THAT STANDARD REMAINS INTRANSIGENT. I ASKED IF HE HAD DISCUSSED THESE OPINIONS WITH COPEN, SINCE WE AND STANDARD AND EVERYONE ELSE HAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT COPEN IS THE CENTRAL RESPONSE MECHANISM FOR EMERGENCIES IN HONDURAS. HE SAID THAT THEY HAD TALKED TO COL SUAREZ, THE LA CEIBA COPEN REPRESENTATIVE BUT THAT COL SUAREZ HAD MOSTLY SUGGESTED THAT THEY TRY HARDER TO WORK WITH STANDARD.

3. I SHARED WITH MR. ACEVEDO MY DISMAY AT FINDING INTERNAL BICKERING IN THE PROCESS OF DISTRIBUTING BADLY NEEDED FOOD SUPPLIES TO THOUSANDS OF NEEDY PERSONS. I ALSO SHARED WITH HIM MY ANXIETY THAT PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNAL BICKERING, IF CARRIED OUT TO THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS CIRCLES, COULD BE DISASTROUS IN VIEW OF THE ALREADY DISASTROUS SITUATION FACING HONDURAS. I ASKED HIM TO CONSIDER A CONTINUATION OF THEIR JOINT EFFORTS WITH STANDARD AND CONFIDED IN HIM INSTANCES OF LARGE QUANTITIES OF SUPPLIES BEING SPECIFICALLY EARMARKED FOR THE LA CEIBA AREA BECAUSE OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE THAT STANDARD AND STANDARD RESOURCES WERE THERE AND WERE WILLING TO AID IN THE RECEIPT AND DISTRIBUTION. I SUGGESTED THAT AN OPEN FIGHT BETWEEN TWO WELL-MEANING AGENCIES (STANDARD AND SUTRASFCO) COULD ONLY HAVE ONE LOSER' IE, THE STARVING HONDURANS. I THEN SHARED WITH MR. ACEVEDO MY SINCERE DESIRE TO BE OF ASSISTANCE NOT SO MUCH TO THE UNION NOR TO STANDARD BUT TO THE PEOPLE THAT WERE EVEN NOW STARVING. I THEN ASKED HIS PREFERENCE AS TO WHETHER I SHOULD SHARE WITH STANDARD THE RESULTS OF THIS MEETING, OR JUST ALLOW THE MATTER TO CONTINUE TO FESTER IN THE MINDS OF THE UNION LEADERS. MR. ACEVEDO ENDED UP BY ASKING ME AT LEAST TO LAY BEFORE STANDARD THEIR CONCERNs AND TO SHARE WITH THEM THE RESULTS OF THIS MEETING. HE AGREED THAT WHATEVER DIFFERENCES EXISTED MIGHT WELL BE SWEPT UNDER THE RUG OF ARMISTICE AT LEAST FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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TIME BEING IN VIEW OF THE STAGGERING JOB FACING ALL OF THEM.

4. MR. ACEVEDO SAID HE AGREED, AND THANKED ME AGAIN FOR OUR WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN AND OUR WILLINGNESS TO BE OF HELP.

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